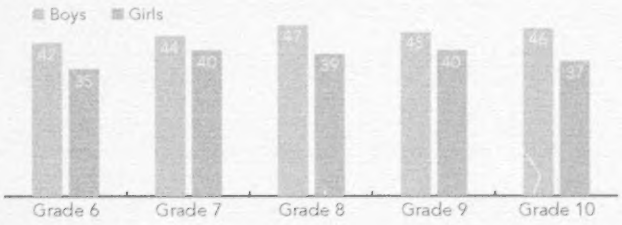
INJURIES TO YOUNG PEOPLE

INJURIES AND THEIR CONSEQUENCES CONTINUE TO BE LEADING PUBLIC HEALTH PROBLEMS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE IN CANADA

Injuries continue to be a leading cause of impaired physical health among young people in Canada. Injuries occur frequently: they lead to considerable lost time, medical treatment and associated disability, and most are both predictable and preventable. In 11–15 year olds, leading causes of injury include participation in sports and other physical activities such as walking, running, cycling, and skating. While less common, injuries caused by motor vehicle crashes and violence are amongst the most serious recorded events.

BOYS REPORTED MORE INJURIES THAN GIRLS

INJURIES REQUIRING MEDICAL TREATMENT (%)



For almost any type of injury, boys report more injuries than do girls. This is also true for all populations and age groups studied within the Canadian HBSC.

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BEHAVIOUR IN SCHOOL-AGED CHILDREN

This fact sheet was developed from the *Canadian Health Behaviour in School-Aged Children (HBSC)* survey. The HBSC survey has been conducted on six occasions in Canada (since 1989) by the Social Program Evaluation Group at Queen's University. It profiles the health of young Canadians aged 11–15 years. The 2010 Canadian national report focused on mental health. HBSC in Canada is also part of a larger international study conducted in affiliation with the World Health Organization, with similar 2010 surveys administered in 39 mainly European and North American countries. The Canadian study is supported by funding from the Public Health Agency of Canada and Health Canada.

See: Pickett, W. (2011). Injury. In J. Freeman et al. (Ed.), *The health of Canada's young people: a mental health focus* (pp. 103–118). Ottawa: Public Health Agency of Canada.

For more information about the HBSC study and for Canada-specific data, please visit: www.publichealth.gc.ca

For international data, visit the HBSC global site at: www.hbsc.org

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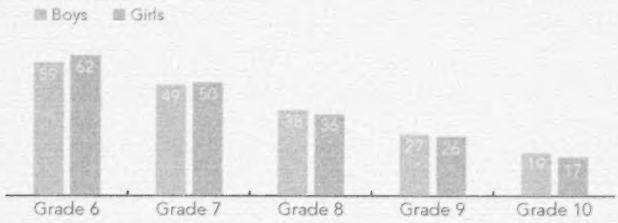
WHERE DO INJURIES HAPPEN?

The leading locations of injury for Canadian youth include sports facilities, school buildings and grounds (both during and outside regular school hours), and at home.

Major Risk Factors

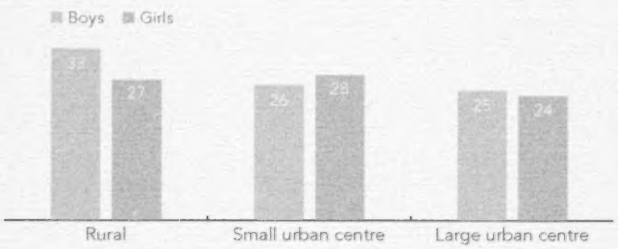
New in 2010, HBSC asked about helmet use during cycling and off-road vehicle use, as well as potential impaired driving behaviours. While regular use of helmets during cycling is a normative behaviour reported by greater than 60% of Grade 6 boys and girls who cycle, by Grade 10, less than 20% of young Canadians who cycle reported regular use of a helmet.

YOUTH WHO WEAR A HELMET WHILE CYCLING (%)



While the majority of young people reported use of a helmet "most" or "all of the time" when they were riding off-road vehicles, this protective behaviour tended to decline in the older (Grade 10) age groups.

RIDING AS A PASSENGER WITH A POTENTIALLY IMPAIRED DRIVER (%)



Approximately 3 in 10 young Canadians reported that in the last 30 days, they had been riding as a passenger in a vehicle being driven by someone who had been drinking alcohol or using other drugs. Smaller proportions of young people reported operating an off-road motor vehicle in this state.

LINKS BETWEEN INJURY AND MENTAL HEALTH

The national HBSC report also explored correlations between the occurrence of injury and several positive and negative mental health outcomes. It is possible that injuries could lead to impaired mental health status. It is equally possible that specific mental health traits could predispose young people to varying risks for injury.

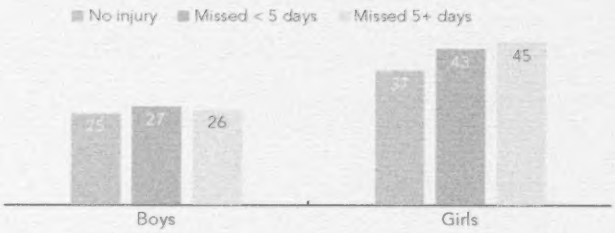
Fighting Injury and Emotional Health

While relatively few youth reported injuries due to physical fights (e.g., in Grade 8, 7% of injuries to boys, 3% of injuries to girls), fighting injuries tended to have increased health consequences. Fighting injuries were among the most serious injury events in terms of time lost and need for significant medical treatment. They were also correlated with higher reported levels of emotional health problems, especially among girls.

Time Lost due to Injury

In general, young people who reported missing school or their other usual activities for five or more days also tended to be more likely to report the highest scores on an "emotional health problems" scale.

TIME LOST DUE TO INJURY AND POOR EMOTIONAL HEALTH (%)



However, there was an interesting phenomenon for sports-related injuries. Youth reporting more time lost due to a sports injury actually tended to report better emotional well-being, likely as a result of the positive effects of being involved in sports, rather than the injuries themselves. One must therefore be careful in interpreting these relationships and "what causes what".

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